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THE
SPEECH
OF THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
JOHN FOSTER,
SPEAKER
OF THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS OF IRELAND,
DELIVERED IN COMMITTEE,
ON
Monday the 17th Day of February, 1800.

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THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN FOSTER,

&c.

HAVING stated my objections fully last year, I should hold myself inexcusable, were I now to trespass as largely on the indulgence of the Committee. I shall therefore be as short as possible, and avoid the repetition of any thing I have already urged. I am glad that the advocates of the measure have laid aside all those high-sounding general expressions of 'consolidating, identifying, and so forth, which they formerly used instead of argument, and which conveyed no meaning or idea to the understanding. However, instead of persevering in those empty phrases, they have resorted to a new mode,

mode ; painful to me, as an Irishman, to hear. They degrade the character of their native country ; and, not content with the most humiliating and unfounded description of it at the present day, they go back and ransack history, with a wish to shew that we are a savage and restless people, devoted to eternal feuds, with uncivilized manners, and constant internal broils and jealousies.

What is the intent of this, Sir ? Is it for the purpose of ingratiating the people of Great Britain and Ireland with each other ? Is it for the purpose of producing reciprocal respect and attachment ?—No ! It is to impose on the public an unfounded impression, that our situation is so bad, our people so debased, and our feuds so rooted, that any change, even though attended with the loss of our liberties, must be desirable. Can those who now hear me, deny, that since the period of 1782, this country has risen in civilization, wealth, and manufactures, until interrupted by the present war, in a greater proportion, and with a more rapid progress, than any other country in Europe, and much more than it ever did itself in a like period before ? And what has this improvement been owing to, but the spirit, the content, and enterprize, which a free constitution inspired ?—to depress which spirit, and to take away which con-

constitution, are the objects of the present measure !

These advocates go farther—They deny that our constitution is free, or that it is possible to enjoy liberty under it. I admit that this kingdom is dependent on the Crown of Britain ; it is our boast and happiness that it is so : but it is dependent only on the Crown, and not on the Kingdom. The Great Seal of England is necessary to our acts of Legislature : and they say that Seal is used through a British Minister, not amenable to us ; and therefore that we are dependent. The withholding the Royal Assent is the only act he can do contrary to our wishes ; and I bid every man recollect—whether it has been ever withheld to our injury, since the constitution of 1782. Its happening is therefore almost theoretical ; and as no Legislature but our own can make a law to bind us, we have only theoretic dependence, but practical independence. Whereas, if we adopt the proposed Union, and give up our Parliament, we shall reverse our situation, and have a theoretic independence, with a practical and sure dependence : we shall be brought back to the miserable state in which we were, when governed by the laws of another Parliament, sitting in another land ; ruled by their will, not by our own ; our purse, our trade, our properties,

our very liberties, at their disposal, and under their controul.

Such have been the endeavours to villify our situation—to make us believe that every temporary ill, and even the horrors of the late rebellion, were produced by it; and a Legislative Union was prescribed as the only effectual remedy. When we objected to it, we were told triumphantly—*Wait till you see the terms; their liberality will astonish you; their immense benefits will silence the strongest opponents.* And is the case so? Far from it.

By the Noble Lord's clear and explicit detail, the whole plan is now before us; and the manner in which the House expressed its surprise on hearing the terms—a surprise, not at their liberality or wisdom, but at their emptiness and injurious tendency—gave the Noble Lord no flattering hope of their having made any favorable impression. On the contrary, I will shew, that they offer no benefits, but are replete with injury; that every article they contain, if desirable, can be as well, if not better, established by separate Parliaments; that they all contain in them the seeds of constant jealousy, and avow separate distinct interests, the continuance of which they insure; and that, by those jealousies, and arousing those distinct interests, they must promote Separation, not Union.

It

It is curious to observe the Noble Lord's arguments last year and now. Our growing wealth was then held out by him, as tending to render us too difficult to be governed by our present constitution; that, with its growth, our consequence, our power, and our pride, would increase; and there was the greater hurry for taking away our Parliament, as that growth was advancing with rapid strides. Now, our poverty is made the pretence;—we must take the Union, to save us from bankruptcy; we have not the means to go on for three years; we have overpaid our due proportion of the war expence by a million a year, and of the peace expence by half a million. We have almost ruined the kingdom by this profusion; and Britain, in proposing the measure, means to give us that million and half million, and hereafter to tax herself to pay it.

Can any rational man believe such a story, or by which of these contradictory arguments will the Noble Lord abide? I have too good an opinion of his head and heart, to believe he could seriously intend to impose or expect that we could believe him;—believe, that our loyalty in straining every nerve to support the empire in its distresses, is to be made an excuse for annihilating a Parliament that was so zealous.

I own we have granted largely. Perhaps we have

have not measured our grants by our means, so much as by our zeal, to uphold Great Britain ; but are we for this to be punished, and our Parliament transported, like a felon, for its extravagant efforts to maintain British connection by maintaining the cause of Britain?---Did the Noble Lord sit by, during the last two Sessions, the most expensive we ever saw, during which he has directed the public affairs of Ireland, and not only see, but urge us to give the supplies we have done, meaning at a future day to make that liberality of our's, and those cordial effusions of our loyalty, so many arguments for taking away our Parliament, and annihilating our Constitution? Did he receive our supplies for four quarters' pay of the British militia, which was more our voluntary offer than his asking? Did he take advantage of our cheerfulness in that grant, to desire a further one, and offer a new estimate for a fifth quarter in the preceding year, and mean to treat us, all the while, in the language used by a great man formerly in this House, like the innocent and industrious Bee, where we made an offer of our honey, predetermining to smother us? No one could urge so strong a charge against his conduct as he makes himself, in this assertion. Where was his ministerial vigilance, where his duty, when he saw us running to ruin, and urged us to proceed? No, Sir! this argument of his seems to be

be a part of the general plan to vilify the Parliament in the eyes of the people; to tell the people that this House has granted their money too fast; that they must discard us, and lodge their purse in the hands of the British Parliament, who will be more natural and more faithful guardians of it.

Is there any child so weak as to believe he is in earnest, or that he means to load England, to save Ireland? And how is this million to be given us? In money? No. Are our past advances to be repaid us? No. Or are taxes to the amount to be taken off? No. He gives us calculation---nothing but calculation. Suppose, however, the incredible fact, that we have been foolishly liberal---what has a Union to say to it? Is it impossible for the Irish Parliament to check its grants; and must we resort to Westminster, to examine our resources, and limit our supplies?

Away with all this silly imposition! And if its own emptiness do not expose it sufficiently, I will go into his detail, and shew you that the Union, instead of saving us expence, would increase it.

The Noble Lord states the relative ability of the two countries to bear taxation to be as $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 1; and states the peace expences to be as $5\frac{3}{4}$ to 1, and the war expences as 9 to 1; and, taking the proportion of the years of war to the years
of

of peace, during the present century, he strikes the medium of $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, which he establishes as the proportion of contribution: and Ireland is consequently to pay $\frac{2}{7}$ and England $\frac{5}{7}$ of the whole annual aggregate expence of both kingdoms.

He states the expences of Britain to have been in the year (I suppose the last year), 32,700,000*l.* and I take his statement as true:—But I cannot find any paper which justifies his account of Ireland's expences. I will therefore take them for the last year, which has been ascertained by the report of the Committee of Accounts—a year in which they were unusually great, owing to the extensive rebellion and the invasion which took place; and they appear, by the return of the issues from the Treasury, for all service, civil, military, and extraordinary, to have been 4,709,254*l.*, or in British money, £.4,347,000

Making together - - - £.37,047,000
 $\frac{2}{7}$ whereof, being 4,358,470*l.* would have been our proportion, had his Union been in force; which exceeds, by a trifle, the sum we did actually pay.

But he goes further; for in his calculation he states that our war proportion would be, British, 4,492,000*l.*; which exceeds the sum paid by us of 4,347,000*l.*; and consequently, by his own statement of his beneficial arrangement,
 which

which is to save us a million, we should pay more than we actually did pay, to the amount of - - - - - £.145,000
 or, in Irish money, - - - - - 157,000

But we have a better criterion than speculative calculation, to shew what would have been our actual situation on the 25th of March last, had this Union proportion taken place at the beginning of the war.

Great Britain, in six years, to the 5th of January 1799, increased her debt in the sum of - - - - - £.186,000,000:

Ireland, in six years, to the 25th of March 1799, increased her's, ¶ 15,092,000, or, in British money, nearly - - - - - 14,000,000

Making together - - - - - 200,000,000

¶ whereof, or Ireland's proportion, would have been in British, 23,530,000*l.*, or, in Irish money, nearly - - - - - 25,500,000

But Ireland increased her debts only - - - - - 15,092,000

And the excess - - - - - 10,408,000
 would have been an additional debt, incurred by Ireland, had this blessed Union taken place in 1793: an additional debt, which, if averaged

on the six years, makes an increased charge in each, of 1,734,666*l.*; and this is one of the ways in which the Noble Lord would give us a million a year.

Again: Great Britain has imposed, during those six years, new permanent taxes, to the net amount of seven millions and a half a year; $\frac{2}{7}$ whereof must have been raised by Ireland, amounting annually to 882,352*l.* British, or 955,881*l.* Irish; and this is another way the Noble Lord, in the generosity of his projected Union, would give us a million a year.

Further: Great Britain has raised, by temporary taxes on imports and exports, and on income, (or by mortgaging them), to the amount of eleven and a half millions a year; $\frac{2}{7}$ whereof, or 1,352,940*l.* British, making 1,465,685*l.* Irish, would have been Ireland's annual proportion.

Thus, had we been fortunate enough to have been united under the Noble Lord's plan in 1793, we should, in the first place, have been in debt, in March last - £.10,408,000

more than we were, being an increase by the year of - 1,734,666

Secondly, we should have had permanent taxes imposed, to the annual net produce of - 955,881

And thirdly, we should have been

been forced last year to have imposed further taxes, to the net annual amount of - - 1,465,685

Making together - - £.4,156,232

Whereas, if we take the calculations the Noble Lord relies on for shewing the revenues of the year, which I do in compliment to him for the present purpose of comparison only, the revenue of Ireland in 1799 exceeded that in 1793, by 700,000*l.* which being deducted from the foregoing, leaves 3,356,239*l.* annual increase. He would lessen our annual expence one million a year, by increasing it near three millions and a half: and this is the way his project is to relieve us; and this is the generous and kind arrangement, to save us expence.

Observe, too, that the Noble Lord, to elucidate how near we are to bankruptcy, tells us we are running in debt faster than England. I have shewn you the amount of each kingdom's increase of debt during the war; Ireland, 14,000,000*l.* British; England, 186,000,000*l.* We run only at the rate of one million for twelve and a half of hers; but he tells us, we should have gone slower, if we had quickened our pace, so as to go—one for every seven and a half.

And now I may dismiss his war calculations; and I trust I have made it clear to mathematical demonstration, that if this nation had been

bleſſed with this Union, and its liberal œconomying proportion for Ireland, by his pretended free gift of one million a year, we ſhould have been near 11,000,000*l.* more in debt than we are; and we ſhould now be forced to raiſe above two millions and a half a year taxes, more than we do at preſent; and we ſhould have received no part of his boacted free gifts.

Let us now go to his peace eſtabliſhment, which he ſtates at 1,500,000*l.* when the preſent war ſhall ceaſe; but for which he produces no reaſonable grounds. On the contrary, he allows the laſt peace eſtabliſhment to have been only 1,012,000*l.*; and there is no reaſon to ſuppoſe all œconomy muſt ceaſe, and that every war is to make the peace eſtabliſhment half as large again as it was before.

Let me remind you, that in 1785, you determined, by a reſolution I had the honour to propoſe, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the revenue ſhould be made equal to the expences. You accordingly granted near 150,000*l.* a year new taxes. The debt then, including 200,000*l.* voted, was 2,381,501*l.*; and in 1793, at the end of the peace, it was only 2,344,314*l.* This ſhews you at once that the peace eſtabliſhment was ſufficient; and it is a conſpicuous proof of the efficacy and wiſdom of the Parliament which you are called on to tranſport as a culprit, that it was capable of adhering, during the whole peace, to a ſteady ſyſtem of œconomy,

nomny, which advanced the trade and wealth of the kingdom: And yet the Noble Lord tells you, that the kingdom cannot go on under its direction, nor any sufficient system of governing the nation be established while it continues, because a rebellion broke out which it has crushed, and an invasion took place which has been repelled; and he tells you---the Catholics are at variance with the Protestants, because they are joining with them to oppose his Union.

He takes the produce of all the taxes last year, to the 25th of March, 1799, at 1,860,000*l.* because such was the amount received at the Treasury; but by some fatality, he forgets, that the Treasury permitted the revenue collectors' balances to increase, so as to be 257,822*l.* more at the end of the year, than at the beginning of it. This increase must have been part of the income of the year, and might have been received if called for; it should therefore be added to the Treasury receipts, and the whole year's net revenue would be 2,118,000*l.* He estimates the permanent increase of the revenue, in 1800, at 450,000*l.*; and he totally omits the lotteries, which may be reckoned at about 70,000*l.* profit, making altogether an income

of	-	-	-	£.2,638,000
The charges of the debt I state				
with him at	-	-	-	1,400,000
which leaves	-	-	-	1,238,000
				for

for peace establishment; and should this not prove sufficient, much more may be obtained by a better collection; and we should remember that this estimate of the revenues is taken from a year of rebellion and invasion.

Where, then, is the mighty phantom of increased taxation, with which he would frighten us into his project? or where is the national bankruptcy with which he so kindly threatens us? One inference naturally occurs from this statement of the future peace expences by the Noble Lord,---that the whole train of the kingdom's expences is to remain,---the Lord Lieutenant, the State, the whole Civil List, the Offices, the Exchequer;---in short, every thing but your Parliament: and I cannot too often or too strongly press upon you this truth, that the real question of the Union is, *Parliament, or no Parliament!*---It is our Parliament they want to remove, and nothing else.

I have throughout followed his mode of calculation, in order to render the comparison of my statement with his the more easy; and I have for that reason admitted his return of the debt at the total capital created, I mean at 17 millions, which the Treasury states, instead of 13 millions, which the Accountant General states, and which the Committee of Supply has voted as the whole due at Lady-day 1799;---and I have carried that principle with him throughout all the calculations, because he preferred

ferred it; and they are made in British money.

I have also admitted his ratio of one to seven and a half, for the contribution; though he allows the real ratio is in war as one to nine.--- War expences are much larger than those of peace; at his own calculations, nearly as five one-half to one; but, really, four three-fourths to one: where then is the fairness of our paying two-fifteenths, instead of two twentieths, when the expences are 4,700,000*l.* a year, and making a saving in return where they were only 1,000,000*l.* and are to be at the utmost only 1,500,000*l.*? particularly as there are but two years of saving or peace calculated for one of loss or war.

Again, he says, he estimates the proportion on the joint grounds of commerce and consumption; but he omits all internal commerce, which is much greater than the external; and, even in the external, he omits to calculate the tonnage of the shipping belonging to each kingdom, and rests solely on the value of the imports and exports, without regarding which country receives the profits of the carriage, though they constitute a material part of the value; and in consumption he omits the article of salt, which is one of very general use: the gross duties on it in the last year were 800,000*l.* in Britain, and 90,000*l.* in Ireland, or nearly one to nine. The stamp duties arising from exchange

exchange of property, litigation, and insurance, shew in some sort the respective abilities of the two countries : their gross amount in Great Britain last year was 2,000,000*l.* (exclusive of post horses, hair-powder license, &c. not adopted here, or not affecting property in its transit), and in Ireland only 137,000*l.* or as *one to fifteen* ; yet these he has omitted. The post office also was adopted by many of his friends in England, as a criterion for the growing wealth of Scotland ; and I wonder at its escaping his attention. It produced last year, in Britain, 874,000*l.* ; in Ireland 80,000*l.* about *one to ten*.

What effect any of these might have, if added in order to form a mean proportion, I will not say ; but I am sure no means should be omitted, which can be relied on, to ascertain so material a point of negotiation, as the contribution.

I have now done with the dry subject of calculation ; and I will ask, were all the mighty benefits of revenue true, how are they to be conferred ? The Union will not change the total mass of expence of both nations in the war ; no ship will be laid by, no regiment disbanded ; on account of it all the force must remain while the war continues. If, then, Ireland is to pay less, Britain must pay more ; if she is to save Ireland from threatened bankruptcy, she is thereby to draw herself closer to it. Where,
then,

then, is our benefit? We must support her; for if she falls, Ireland falls with her; consequently this supposed transfer will not serve us, if it weakens her. But it is all a delusion. Can any man in his senses think that the minister can call on Great Britain really to raise a million a year, to give it to Ireland, who has not complained, and is willing herself to shew her own zeal; who deprecates the kindness, and wants to refuse his offers? Besides, were it actually and *bonâ fide* to be given to Ireland, this proportion is to last only twenty years, or thereabouts; perhaps not near so long; and twenty years is a short period in the life of a nation. Well might a sagacious minister, with long forecast, give a little boon during twenty years, in order to get an entire command of the purse of a great nation ever after. And the time when it is finally to cease is chosen with the most unfavourable prospect to any little remains of our prosperity which may then exist. This proportion, so favourably made for us in the Noble Lord's opinion, is to be at an end; and we are to undergo equal taxation, instead of paying only one part for every seven and a half of hers, when the existing debt of Britain shall be cleared.

He acknowledges that the proportion is exclusive of every consideration of respective debts, which press heavier on Britain than Ireland;



land ; and he admits that this proportion in favour of Ireland is necessary, even while Britain is incumbered with the weight of taxes, to pay the charges of her great debt. Where, then, is the justice or policy, that, at the moment these charges cease, and all her necessities of life and manufactures are freed from the weighty incumbrance and new vigour thereby given to her efforts as a commercial nation, we are to lose the benefit which we should then have most need of, to keep us up? There is neither justice, wisdom, nor liberality, in such an arrangement.

The next subject is that of Commerce; and he says, that the regulations he proposes are formed on the Commercial Propositions which this House agreed to in 1785, and even in some instances exceed them.

Sir, I may say I framed those Propositions; and I should have been ashamed to have proposed them, if they had contained so little benefit, and so much injury, towards this country, as those he now offers to you. They reduced the duties on the importation of the articles of gross produce or manufacture from one kingdom into the other, where they were higher in one, to the amount payable in the other. As our duties were almost universally lower, *every protection given by duty to our manufactures would therefore have remained; and the result*
would

would have been, that *our* duties would have been the standard : in short, as the higher British duties were inoperative, the object was to leave the intercourse in general in a sort of *statu quo*, so far as duties affected it. But what do these terms declare? That *every duty existing in Ireland on British manufacture, is either to be reduced immediately to ten per cent., or totally to cease.* Let us examine the articles that will be affected by this reduction.

I take those in his Lordship's schedule, No. 2.—*Apparel*, will be reduced from 12*l.* 14*s.* 1*d.* British, to ten per cent. ; and its import has increased rapidly under the larger duties *. *Copper wrought* will receive a like reduction: its import is not large; but as it is in general use, we know not how far the removing the present protection of 2*l.* 14*s.* 1*d.* British, may increase it.

Glass will be importable likewise at a like reduction ; and its manufacture, though thriving, is not so established, as that we can pronounce it can safely bear the reduction.

Haberdashery, hats, hardware, millinery, paper stained, pottery, saddlery, and manufactured leather,

D 2

* The average annual imports for the four years ending in 1795 was 2104*l.* ; and for the four years in 1799, 5328*l.* ; and in the very last year, 1799, it was 6383*l.* ; increasing, on the average of the last four years, in nearly half of its former total amount.

ther, are all to be importable on a reduction of duty, no where less than 2*l.* 14*s.* 1*d.* per cent. British, and in some instances more; and the import of sadlery has increased rapidly.

There will be a reduction, too, in the protection of the *silc manufacture*: it is a declining one: and it is a wretched impolicy to forward its decline by lessening any assistance it receives from the present duties.

The article of *steel* must have crept in by mistake; for if we believe Mr. Wetherall's paper, now on the table, it is classed among the articles not at present subject to a duty of 10*l.* per cent: so that it is in the singular predicament, though a material of manufacture, of having the duty on its import raised.

But, of all the articles, the one that affects us most is *cotton*. By the petition presented a few hours ago, it appears, that the present duties on plain calicoes may be estimated at between 40 and 50 per cent. of the value; on plain muslins, about 35 per cent.; and on coloured, or worked, or figured, very little less. We have, I believe, about thirteen cotton mills erected, at great expence, capable of working 500,000*lb.* of cotton. We have many factories built, and much capital vested; all on the faith of these duties, giving a very extended employment to the industrious poor; and all are to be ruined by this fatal project.

It

It is true, the Noble Lord has just now stated that he means to alter the proposition so as to reduce this valuable and essential protection of our cotton manufactures *by degrees*. He will not destroy them all at once, but allow them gradually to die. Instead of a sudden, he will indulge them with a lingering, death; and he is inclined to this, he says, from a conversation with one or two manufacturers last week. I cannot help remarking here the ample proof which this change of his opinion gives us, of what must be our situation under a Parliament in Westminster. The Noble Lord, with the most able assistants from hence, the head of the law, of the exchequer, and of the revenue, framed these propositions in England; and I will do them the justice to believe, with the most serious intention not to let this one be injurious to Ireland; yet the moment he talks to a manufacturer *here*, he sees and admits its error. Need we have stronger evidence to support the assertion I have often made, that no Parliament out of Ireland, however well intentioned, can have local knowledge, or obtain information sufficiently to understand our interests? that an Irish parliament is alone equal to it; and that, in removing it, we remove our natural and only capable guardians, and with them our trade, our manufactures, and our prosperity?

But to return. Is it not clear, that whether
this

this manufacture is to be doomed to a sudden or to a lingering death, every man must look to draw his capital out of it as speedily as he can; and if not before the gradual reduction to 10 per cent., certainly before the total extinction of that 10 per cent., which is to take place in 20 years? And it is as evident, that no capital will come from England to a manufacture so circumstanced; and that if it requires so high a per centage to protect it against English import, it can never find a market from hence in England.

The last article in the Noble Lord's schedule, is *stockings*. Will gentlemen believe that silk stockings now pay on import 4s. 8d. a pair, and by this reduction to 10 per cent, on the value, they would probably pay only from 1s. to 1s. 6d. Need I ask what will become of our hosiers?

I should tire the house with mentioning all the manufactures which will be affected; they will be seen in the paper No. 9. signed by Mr. Wetherall, wherever 12l. 14. 1d. is mentioned as the duty. They are upwards of seventy in number (see Appendix), and the Noble Lord avows that the loss of revenue by taking off duties, and lowering duties to 10l. per cent., will be 32,000l. a year. Protecting duties then to the amount of 32,000l. a year are to be withdrawn. Is there a man can hear this without surprise

surprise at the attempt, and sorrow for the individuals whose property will be affected? Their melancholy apprehensions must be truly pitiable;—they may well upbraid us for all our patriotic endeavours to induce them to spend their capitals in the business, and for our now abandoning them to ruin.

When I talk of the Commercial Propositions of 1785, I allude to those which are in your journals, and which received the unanimous approbation of this House: those from Britain never were proposed for assent or dissent in this House. I do not allude to them, nor to the bill which followed, and which never was read a second time. Every man concerned knows how long I contended to uphold our own Irish Propositions; in which I maintained the *statu quo* in respect to the duties, and of course preserved all the existing protections, and particularly those by which the cotton has since flourished.

Besides; the case is very different now. The Irish Parliament was then to continue, and could prevent any evil which might follow: both Parliaments, both the contracting parties, were to continue: but this change is to be made a fundamental part of a perpetual system, without our Parliament to watch over us, and without a power of the United Parliament to alter; for the

the advocates of the measure contend, they cannot alter any article.

But this is not the only variation in the proposed system, from those propositions which I shall be ever proud of the share I had in forming. They provided for an effectual preference in each kingdom against similar articles from foreign states; thereby strengthening the security for the Irish linens against the foreign in the British market:—these are wholly silent on that head.

They left to both parliaments the power of duties on imports of foreign articles, or foreign materials of manufacture for home use: these take away that power from Ireland, by taking away its parliament.

I look to iron particularly in this view.—Our infant manufacture requires us to continue its low duty on import of 12s. 6d. the ton. The duty on import into Britain is above 3l.; and it is not impossible but that from want of local information, the plausible argument might prevail in the United Parliament, that in one and the same Empire the duties on the import of a material should be the same throughout, and thereby ours might be raised to theirs.

Raw silk is situated in the same way, our import duty being less than theirs.

As to the *corn trade*, it is exempted from all specific

specific change, and left wholly to the control of the united parliament. Whatever security we may justly look to in the integrity of that parliament, we have none in its power of local information. The bounties to Britain which exist, and the conditional prohibitions on import from thence, have raised agriculture in this kingdom. This distinct interest may happen to be misunderstood, or a wish may prevail to try the extinguishment of the regulations; and financial views for saving revenue may further that wish.

For one article of the Propositions I cannot understand the motives; *hops, salt, and coals*, are ever to continue subject to the present duties on import into Ireland.

The greater part of the duty on *Hops* arose from a measure which I laboured much to accomplish; the getting Britain to draw back her excise duty on export, and to let us as the consumers impose it on import. Suppose Great Britain at a future day to lay down her excise duty: we cannot, under this article, lower our import duty, which was the equivalent; and of course the British beer, which is to come in duty free, may have a decided preference over our own.

As to *Salt*, it is so great an article of general use, and particularly among the poor, that its duties ought not to be the subject of perpetual

and unalterable compact; especially when we consider the state of those duties. It is but two years since they were raised, from *one shilling* a ton on rock-salt, to *three pounds*. Gentlemen stare! but the fact is so, it was a wondrous rise; the ton is valued at the custom-house at ten shillings and sixpence, and may perhaps be worth fifteen shillings. Here then is a duty of between 4 and 500 per cent. on the value, of only two years continuance, to be made perpetual without redemption; and this duty being imposed to operate as an excise duty on the consumption of white salt, its continuance is as absurd to be provided for, as if we were to provide that an internal excise of equal amount should continue for ever, contrary to what would be the case, even under these articles, if it were now an excise duty.

White salt is raised from 12s. 6d. a ton, to 4l. duty on import.

Coals are now exportable from Britain, at a duty there of 9d. per ton, which is to cease; but their duties here are to remain for ever. Where manufactures are established near the coast in Great Britain, the coasting duty has been removed, I believe; at least I recollect two acts, one for their going free to the copper works in Wales, the other for their going free to parts of Cornwall; and since 1793, there has been no coasting duty to Scotland; it was exchanged

changed for another on account of its prejudicial effects; but had the Scotch articles of Union been peremptory like this one, it never could have been altered.

One curious circumstance attending the coal regulation is, the manner in which Dublin will be affected. You will find in No. 9. that the duty on import there, is one shilling and eightpence four-fifths per ton, and only nine pence halfpenny to the rest of Ireland. The reason is, that there exists a local duty of one shilling per ton, for the internal improvement of the city; and this local tax is blended with the general duty on the articles; and its perpetual continuance is enforced; though Mr. Witherall returned it as being more than ten per cent. on the value. I am persuaded this was not intended; but it is another instance to prove the impossibility of sufficient local information being procured to assist local deliberation in Britain, for Ireland, and how essential the retaining our own parliament is to our interests.

The next article I shall notice, is *Sail Cloth*; and the Noble Lord has dwelt largely on the benefits its manufactures is to receive, by being deemed British, and of course admitted to equal pre-emption with British in the navy, and equal use in the first sails of every British trading vessel. He forgets that this regulation, to which we have every claim of right and justice,

tice, was intended and promised if this Union had never been thought of; and I must remark that Irish sail cloth is now, and has been long, free into Britain; and the great measure which injured our manufacture of it has been done away three years ago, by Great Britain discontinuing her bounties on its export to Ireland: only part therefore of the injurious regulations under which our sail cloth laboured, remains for this article to remove; and we have a right to expect it without a Union.

The free import of *Wool* from Britain, which three propositions allow, is cried up as a great sacrifice made by Britain, and a great gain to us.—I acknowledge its liberality, and that it was not included in the Commercial Propositions of 1785; at the same time that I cannot see its particular beneficial effects. Our great import of woollen manufacture consists chiefly of the finer cloths, in which Spanish wool is solely or principally used: we cannot expect any, or at least, very little wool fit for them from Britain; and I apprehend the freight on it would be much higher on account of its bulk than five one-half per cent., which the Noble Lord states to be the general charge on all articles from Britain to Ireland. Its freight is so expensive, that I am well informed an attempt to send it from Dublin to Cork, coastwise, was abandoned, and it was sent by land. Spanish
wool

wool is as free to us without duty, as to Britain; yet we manufacture a very small part of our consumption of superfine clothing.

If the coarser wool should come, which might be principally used in carpeting, you will recollect that these same propositions take off the present protecting duties on them of 12l. 14s. 1 per cent. If wool in Britain should again fall to the low price it used to be at, compared with ours, we might possibly import; the consequence would be lowering the price of our own; which however beneficial to the clothier or carpet-maker, might not be relished well by the grazier; but the whole of it promises to be so trifling, that it is not worth further observation.

The article of *Linseed Oil*, deserves remark: the duties on it, except the hereditary, are appropriated to the linen manufactures, and were proposed by me, many years ago, in order to encourage the saving of Irish flax seed. Their produce was accordingly given by the trustees in premiums on linseed oil made of Irish seed. The object of this double encouragement by protection and by bounty, was to provide a consumption for the Irish seed, which might not be fit for sowing; and in general, by the saving of seed, to secure a stock which might answer for sowing, in case of a dearth of foreign seed. These articles do away this, I am persuaded, unintentionally.

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To sum up the whole of the Commercial Regulations; they lower all protecting duties above ten per cent. to ten per cent., and remove all others; operating thereby injuriously on above seventy articles of manufacture, and ruining entirely the cotton business. The Propositions passed by this House in 1785, reduced none, and preserved them all.

These secure no preference for linen, or any articles in the British market, against foreign produce, and take from the linen, as I said before, the security of our compact for that purpose: those of 1785, ensured an effectual preference. This is not a time for me to trouble the committee with stating that compact; the leading features of it may be seen in your Journals, in a report made by Sir Lucius O'Brien in 1773.

These terms made perpetual the new and excessive duties in Ireland on salt; they render unalterable the duties on hops, and coals: those of 1785 left an Irish Parliament, with powers to reduce or remove them at pleasure.

These leave our brewery unprotected, allowing only a countervailing duty, as if our excise on beer continued; which is another instance of the want of Irish information in England. Those of 1785 left the existing protection.

These make no provision as to the retaining our low duties on the import of raw materials. Those of 1785, gave our parliament full power
over

over them ; and yet the Noble Lord has stated that the propositions now before the committee must be approved by every man, who supported those of 1785 !

I did not only approve of those in 1785, but I was the chief framer of them ; and these are so unlike them, that I disclaim all connexion with them.——The Noble Lord boasts of the superior natural advantages of Ireland for a re-export trade ;---may I ask whose capital is to carry it on ? It is of all trades the least beneficial to a country, and fit only for the superfluity of capital, after what can be employed in home-trade and manufacture, or agriculture. The British merchant must prefer storing his goods near his home within his reach. But if we have those natural advantages, does this proposition offer any inducement, which the present laws do not afford ? He must know it does not. The act of excise allows the bonding, which our own laws have restrained in many articles ; and the act of custom provides for establishing the free ports.

I have now gone through this curious detail of Commercial Inquiry ; and it only remains to examine the beneficial effect which he says it will have on the Irish revenues.

It takes off, as I have stated, 32,000l. a year of protecting duties, duties which raised revenue
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not on Irish goods, but on British, in favour of Irish.---It is to remove 44,000*l.* a year paid on the export of our cattle, hides, tallow, butter, beef, pork, and linen yarn. As to these latter duties in general, I will call to the recollection of the committee, that in the year 1780, when I proposed a bill in imitation of that of Britain in 1722, with a sweeping clause to take off all duties on the export of all goods of the growth, produce, or manufacture of Ireland, except on several enumerated articles, so as to do away the 5 per cent. general duty on export by the act of Charles II., I consulted many eminent merchants who dealt largely in these articles; who all considered the duties on them, as no incumbrance to the sale; that they had existed since 1660 without injuring the trade, and were never felt as in any way discouraging it: and accordingly I let the duties continue.

They are, 1*s.* a barrel on beef, worth from 4 to 4*l.* 10*s.* 0*d.*, on a barrel of pork worth from 4*l.* 10*s.* 0*d.* to 5*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* and 1*s.* 6*d.* on a cwt. of butter, now worth 5*l.*—the percentage of this duty has been gradually decreasing as the value has gradually risen. Those three articles produced 29,818*l.**

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* Beef, ...	4,638 <i>l.</i>
Butter, ...	16,198 <i>l.</i>
Pork, ...	8,982 <i>l.</i>
	29,818 <i>l.</i>

The export of beef to Great Britain was far greater in the last year than in any former one ; and the whole of the last six years exceeds the amount of any former six years ; so that this duty has not affected the trade.

The export of butter was checked last year by the rebellion ; but its export to Britain has been greater in the eight preceding years than in the same space of time before ; and the export of pork, though lessened last year a little by the same cause, was greater than ever in the year to March 1798, and has been in a gradual progress of encrease for many years. To remove all these duties therefore may be deemed a favour to Great Britain, who pays them in the price she gives for the goods ; but not a consideration for Ireland, who must raise taxes in their stead, and probably could not find any so little liable to be felt. I do not wish to be understood to say that that favour never should be given to Britain, but the Irish parliament can do it, without a Union, whenever it may be advisable.

As to the duties on live cattle, which have produced 7631*l.*, they have been raised since 1793 from 1*s.* to 6*s.** a head, to discourage their export, that they might go abroad in a more ad-

* Duty in 1793		1 <i>s.</i>
Raised in 1794	. . to .	3 <i>s.</i>
— in 1799	. . to .	6 <i>s.</i>

advantageous state, of beef, leather, and tallow. And the tax on hides, small as it is to Britain, being only four-pence, or one third of what it is to other countries, would be beneficial to our tanning trade, if it operated to prevent export.

The revenue raised on the export of tallow is 1s. 6d. the cwt. It produces about 850l. only, and we import above half as much as we export; so that if it did check the export, we should not suffer.

The last article this revenue arises on, is linen yarn, which, at one halfpenny a lb. produces 3840l. sterling; and if this duty tends to render it dearer abroad, than it is at home, no man will say that it can be beneficial to our manufacture to take it off. For what then are these alterations desired? For Ireland? No; but to give, at our expence, to Britain, provisions, cattle, and yarn, cheaper than she now receives them; and so little cheaper, that hardly any one there would thank us for the regulation, though it takes from us a revenue of 44,000l. a year, which we must replace.

Let us now see the return we are to receive for voluntarily complimenting Great Britain with this sure revenue of 76,000l. a year, raised on her, and not felt by us. In the first place, 17,000l. a year, duty paid in Britain on the export of coal to us, which I agree is a fair and
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effectual return as far as it goes ;---9000/. a year duties retained in England, on subsidy goods : ---if these goods pay the same duties in Ireland on import thence as from the place of growth, Great Britain retaining them, pays a bounty to their amount for encouraging our direct trade to the place of growth, and would be wise therefore in retaining them no longer ; and if we forbear to their amount, in laying as heavy a duty on the import from her as from their native country, she is obliged to us, and ought not to retain them, lest any want of revenue here might make us cease that forbearance.

The next article is a curious offer ; 58,000/. a year, from the East India Company, being our $\frac{2}{17}$ of 500,000/. a year, which that company covenanted to pay, when her new charter was granted in 1793 ; one penny of which I believe she has not yet paid, and a share of which we should have been considered in justice entitled to, without regard to Union, when we confirmed that charter the same year.

But let me tell you that the payment of it may be postponed to eternity, if the lords of the treasury shall deem it inconvenient to the affairs of the Company to pay it ; for they have a power by the act to do so : and let me ask the Noble Lord, why he has omitted to allot to us a share of the twelve millions to the sinking fund,

fund, and of the surplus to the consolidated fund, provided for out of the profits by the same act? He nods assent; but will it, or any part of it, come before the time that our proportion of contribution is to cease?—it will be inoperative afterwards.

By this exchange then, if I can call it such, we give up a good and certain revenue of 76,000*l.* a year, which we raise on export to Britain; and she gives us up a similar revenue of 26,000*l.* only. For the remainder we are sent to India to look; and this is what the Noble Lord calls the beneficial effect of his precious system to the Irish revenue: it is simply this; that we are to find a new tax to the amount of 58,000*l.* a year, to advance it for the East India Company.

Upon the whole then of FINANCE, REVENUE, and COMMERCE, review every article, and be they good, or be they bad, I defy any man to say that there is one article to which an Irish Parliament is incompetent; or one to which a United Parliament is not less adequate; inasmuch as the arrangement of duties and of trade, between the two kingdoms, requires a quick and ready knowledge of the local circumstances of this kingdom, which can only be effectually obtained by a resident legislature. And if any man thinks there is any one article in all the arrangement

arrangement stated, which is beneficial to this kingdom, I ask him, why not enact it now, or why postpone it to a United Parliament?

Having now dispatched COMMERCE and FINANCE, the next consideration is, the CONSTITUTIONAL EFFECTS of the proposed arrangement; and I will state without fear of contradiction, that in every step it makes, it breaks in upon some known and established constitutional principle; it is one course of constitutional and dangerous INNOVATION from beginning to end.

As to the Upper House, it creates a sort of mongrel peer, half lord, half commoner, neither the one or the other complete, and yet enough of each to remind you of the motley mixture. Every body knows, or should know, that, by the original and uninterrupted constitution of parliament, a lord cannot interfere in the election of a commoner; yet here he is not only to interfere, but may be a candidate, and may sit and act as a commoner. The twenty-eight chosen lords are to sit for *life*, though they are only representatives; thus counteracting one great principle, that representatives shall only act for a time limited, acknowledged by the septennial and octennial bills, and by the articles of the Scotch Union in respect to their lords.

Further; with this seat for life to the chosen lords, what is to become of the remaining peers, perhaps

perhaps nearer two hundred than one hundred in number? They now are legislators; pass these articles, they cease instantly to be so; they will be the only subjects in Ireland, incapable of acting as legislators; a degradation ruinous to the nobility. Every heir to a title, mediately or immediately, now looks in his studies and his education, to qualify himself for the high duties of a legislator, of an hereditary counsellor to the crown. This fatal measure of election for life leaves so little hope and so little chance, that all inducement to improvement, to education, to study the interests of his country, is done away. You depress the spirit, and enervate the exertions, of all the rising nobility of the land. Nay, further; by a strange sort of absurdity, the measure in allowing him as a commoner to sit for a British seat, and denying him to do so for an Irish one, admits this monstrous position; that in the country where his property, his connexions, and residence is, he shall not be chosen a legislator; but in the one where he is wholly a stranger, he may: and you add this certain consequence, that you will induce a residence of the Irish nobility in Britain, where they may be elected commoners, and must of course endeavour to gain acquaintance, solicit interest, and make themselves known to the electors; thereby encreasing the number of your Absentees, and gradually weaning the men
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of largest fortune from an acquaintance or a connexion with their native country.

As to the Commons, this fatal Union will not be less unconstitutional. It reduces their number from three hundred to one hundred; but the constitution has pronounced the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of three hundred to be necessary to legislature, and to preserve the balance of power established among the three branches. And it not only commits a violation on the number, but on the qualifications. One great principle of our constitution is, that in the Commons all species of property is represented, and the wisdom of the whole increased by a mixture of country gentlemen, merchants, lawyers, and men of all professions. This measure shuts the door against commercial men, and against the law. A merchant; who may spare his time with ease near his own home, to enlighten this assembly with the result of his experience and enquiries, will not be able to desert his business for several months in the year, and reside in another kingdom. Will any of those lawyers whom I see opposite to me, give up their professions to attend the United Parliament? No man can do justice to his client, and attend the bar only one or two terms in the year.

The nation must therefore lose the benefit of the talents and constitutional knowledge of all
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the eminent members of that profession. And as if these innovations were not sufficient, the miserable remains of this parliament, thus reduced and degraded, is to be sent to Westminster, to another kingdom; where it will be too far removed from its own to receive information for guarding or promoting its interest: it may learn imperial rights there, as some gentlemen say, but it may neglect its own.

Need I mention the case of controverted elections? Securing the purity of elections can alone preserve the purity of parliament; and so conscious are the promoters of this Union that justice cannot be administered by a trial in England, that they propose to send a deputation from our quota of members to try the merits in Ireland. But how can they try? Where will be the power to enforce the attendance of witnesses, to punish for prevarication or breach of privilege? Yet you all know how often this house is applied to to interpose its authority, and even to enforce the attendance of each individual of the committee. To delegate power to any court to interfere, is a direct violation of every doctrine and practice on the subject. If then it is impracticable to have the trial here, and it must be with the parliament in Westminster, few men, however just their claim, will undertake the expence. The Sheriffs will in fact nominate; or rather the Government
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who appoint the Sheriffs. If any man doubts how Sheriffs may act, let him look to the conduct of many on the present measure, how they have refused their constitutional duty of calling their counties together, to take the sense of the freeholders on this great question:---and by whose instigation did the generality of them do so?

One remark, and a very strong one, arises on the moment. The Noble Lord, in bringing the committee to Ireland, acknowledges the local difficulties which will prevent *justice* from being attainable in Westminster by inquiry there; and if it is so as to *justice*, does not the same reasoning go more strongly to every inquiry on *commercial subjects* and *local interests*? with this difference, that in the one case the expence of the individuals giving evidence is to be paid them, but in the other they are to volunteer the journey and the cost at their own suit. Must not the Noble Lord acknowledge, if to attain justice, the merits of an Irish election cannot be tried in the imperial parliament, neither can all the other objects of inquiry necessary to legislature be obtained by that parliament; and that a parliament at Westminster will be as inefficient to the one as to the other?

All these declare at least, that the Noble Lord and his advisers are, by their own admission, twenty years too soon in producing this measure;

sure; for twenty years seems to be their standard for supposing the interests in the debt, revenues, and commerce, may be less separate than they are: and I advise him most sincerely to withdraw it, until these twenty years shall have elapsed, and until the events of time shall have completely identified every interest, if ever they shall do so; and an entire Union of the NATIONS, and not a Union of PARLIAMENTS solely, shall of itself occur, and require only the form of law to sanction it.

Need I state the violent destruction of all chartered rights, which will attend this measure? Rights vested in some bodies for six hundred years, and always exercised for the benefit of the state; and which sometimes have proved the great safeguard and security of the constitution.

One consequence is too striking to be passed over. What would you think of the man who should be hardy enough to rise in this house and propose to make *all taxes perpetual*? Yet this must be a necessary step towards the measure.

But will the Noble Lord tell me, why he has provided for a change in the *quantum* of contribution, because it rests on the varying change of our relative proportion of trade and of consumption; and, though he estimates the number of representatives on that proportion, joined with the comparative population which is
also

also always varying, why he has omitted to provide for the increase of our *representative proportion* likewise? If the Union enriches us, the representative proportion ought to increase, as population, trade, and wealth increase.

As to the third branch of the legislature,---the King. This measure limits his prerogative in making peers, and it takes from him the benefit of all those hereditary counsellors which the constitution has attached to him, except the few who may be chosen.

Thus does it, like every other ill considered wanton project, teem with evils : it injures revenue and trade, and in every regulation violates all the known principles of the constitution, in the Lords, the Commons, and the King. It is called an Union, but it does not deserve the name: it is any thing you please but what it professes to be. A real Union is a full and entire Union of the two nations ; this is a Union of the two parliaments only : there can be no Union of the nations, while distinct interests exist ; and every line almost of the plan declares the distinctness of interest, in revenue, in commerce, in purse, in constitution. The Union does nothing, if it does not identify ; but there can be no identification with distinct interests. One purse can be managed by one parliament ; but two purses require two parliaments. You provide for the separation of the

debts of each, and the discharging these debts, because the interest of each nation is separate in them. You acknowledge a distinct interest in the current expences, because you provide a distinct contribution for defraying them.

The Noble Lord laments, that the different situations of the manufactures, and the different burthens of debt prevent a complete identity; and he is right: it effectually does: but he not only acknowledges it to exist now, but his plan provides for its future continuance; for with regard to debt, provision is made for Ireland incurring debt at all future time, for current expence, when England may not; and the debt so incurred is to continue separate.

The duties on foreign goods, as to drawbacks, are to constitute separate purses, and separate accounts of credit is to be kept.

The duties on the channel trade are to continue: why? Avowedly because the interest of the manufacturer is totally distinct; and by a curious fatality in this measure, provision is made for rousing all these distinctnesses, and bringing them forward into discussion at stated times to all eternity, without a distinct parliament for the people interested to speak through. What an unceasing fund for keeping alive old jealousies and provoking new ones!

The corn regulations too are exempted, for the very reason that they are distinct, and cannot

not be identified. And here let me ask you, if we had now a United Parliament, with the present high price of corn in England, and our regulations had been changed as to our export, by that parliament, do you believe any corn would by this time have been left in Ireland? The answer must be, *no*; and you would have had no parliament to allay the discontent of the people.

Even in a constitutional view, these propositions declare distinct national interests, and provide for their continuance. The Irish peerage is to be kept distinct to all future time, by the power of creating new Irish peers: why is this?---Scotland was too wise to allow it, or to allow distinctness of debt or distinctness of tax to remain: she wanted, and she was capable of receiving, a full and entire Union of the nations. The minister proposes as to Ireland a Union of parliaments only, any other he sees impracticable. Talk to eternity on the subject, the real question is, what I have always stated it, *Parliament or no Parliament*.—Union is a word to deceive. If the influence of the crown is not the real cause for continuing the Irish peerage, why shall not every peer hereafter to be created, be a peer of the empire? and when the present number shall be reduced to the quota of twenty-eight, let them become peers of the empire, and elections cease.

Why

Why is a distinct interest to be created by allowing Irishmen, I mean Irish Peers, to be capable of fulfilling the trust of representing English constituents, but not of representing Irish? Or why are English commoners deemed unfit to try Irish elections, when all are said to be Members of one Parliament; where the interest and duty of every Member is, by the Constitution, general, and not local? And why, in the arrangement, is the whole diminution to be made from the Irish Parliament? Why shall Britain retain *all* her Commoners and *all* her Lords, while the Lords here are to be reduced to twenty-eight, and the Commoners to one hundred? Is it acknowledged that the separate interest of Britain is so very distinct?

If I were to consider only the separate exchequer, and separate purse which those propositions acknowledge throughout, I should even on theoretic ground reject the Union. The purse, in the hands of the commons, is the essence of the nation's liberty; and is the constitutional balance against undue exercise of the prerogative. I will never part with it willingly, while I have sense to feel and know the value of the British constitution and British connection.

The next part of the subject which I shall take up, is that which concerns the religious differences. The right honourable gentleman next the Noble Lord, asks, if I have authority to say,

say, what will become of the religious question, should a Union be rejected? I ask him, by what authority he joins the religious question he alludes to, with the Union? It has nothing to do with the Union, except, as it is introduced by the promoters of the measure, to alarm and divide the country. Is the Irish Parliament to be so degraded, that it cannot discuss every question of Irish concern; and that a distant Parliament, sitting in a distant land, is more adequate to it, or will give more content by its decision? No, Sir; we are not so lost to all duty, to all love of our country, to all integrity, that we are not to be trusted with the concerns of Ireland.

I will tell the right honourable gentleman, why I do not join that question with the Union. The Union seeks to take away our Parliament, our freedom, and our prosperity. The Catholic is equally a native of Ireland, equally bound by duty, by inclination, to his country; he fees with us the danger of the attack; and joins with the Protestant, to prevent its approach, and save the Constitution: he is wise in doing so; all differences are lost, they are asleep in this common cause; he joins heart to heart with his fellow subjects, to oppose the common enemy, this dreadful, destructive, and I had almost said, deceitful measure. If I were to ransack every dictionary in the English language,
I could

I could not find words strong enough to express my abhorrence of the plan, or my dread of its fatal consequences.

You talk of its restoring tranquillity: it is but talk. Will taking men of property out of the country do it? Will a plan full of the seeds of jealousy and discontent effect it? Will depriving a nation of the liberty which it has acquired, and to which it is devoted, ensure content?---If religious jealousies disturb its quiet, are they to be allayed by a British Parliament? No, Sir; leave our own concerns to our own Parliament; we are equal to their management; and we will not yield in wisdom, liberality, patriotism, or firmness, to any Parliament that can sit in Britain, formed on new speculations, unknown to the Constitution.

But I ask, if those jealousies have disturbed our quiet, who roused them? I answer, that Bench!---not the Noble Lord, but those who then sat on that Bench; British, not Irish, Councils roused them! and British, not Irish, Councils, now propose this Union.

Let us look back to 1782. Irish spirit, and British liberality removed all jealousies at that period. Not one has occurred since between the kingdoms; and British Councils now come forward, to undo the measures of 1782, to rouse by this ill-timed project, public apprehension, and to put us into the situation we were in before

fore that period, when continued jealousies retarded our prosperity, and distracted our tranquillity.

Review the whole measure, it leaves to us every appendage of a kingdom, except what constitutes the essence of independence, a resident Parliament: --- separate state, separate establishment, separate exchequer, separate debt, separate courts, separate laws, the Lord Lieutenant, and the Castle; all remain: we shall become a colony on the worst of terms; paying a settled system of contribution, to be levied by laws not of our own making. And what are the benefits in return? None pretended, except in trade and revenue, which I have shewn you to be the reverse of benefits; but if they were ever so great, I would spurn the offer, to be purchased by our liberty. Neither revenue nor trade will remain, where the spirit of liberty ceases to be their foundation; and nothing can prosper in a state which gives up its freedom. I declare most solemnly, that if England could give us all her revenue, and all her trade, I would not barter for them the free Constitution of my country. Our wealth, our properties, our personal exertions, are all devoted to her support: our freedom is our inheritance, and with it we cannot barter.

But, if I dislike the whole of the measure for its mischief and imperfections, I reprobate still

more the means proposed for effecting it. When the Noble Lord mentioned *compensation for the boroughs*, he saw the feelings of the House; and I was happy to observe that in his printed speech (which he has mentioned), it was omitted. I thought the indignation which appeared, had induced him to abandon it; but I now find from his right honourable friend, that it is not given up. Were I speaking in another Parliament, I should impute the hardness which mentioned such a base and humiliating bribe, to a previous knowledge that it had received the approbation of many Members. What is the plain language of it? I am to propose a measure by which two hundred of you are to lose your seats; many of you have bought them; and others claim a right in them: you shall not suffer; the public shall pay you for selling yourselves and your constituents; and the price you receive shall become the purchase money for your selling your country afterwards. It is a most monstrous unconstitutional offer. Do you publicly avow that borough representation is a private property, and do you confirm that avowal by the government becoming the purchasers?

The right honourable gentleman says it cannot be a bribe to corrupt, because it is to be distributed to both sides of the House without distinction. I know, Sir, as well as he does, that this House is above corruption; but suppose

pose we were in another House, where such an offer might corrupt: those who oppose a measure which is to destroy the boroughs, cannot take the money as a bribe, because their vote goes to preserve, not to destroy them; but all those who support the measure may take the money as such, because by their vote they destroy their borough, and the money is the compensation for that vote; or, in other words, the bribe, the profligate and disgraceful bribe.

Suppose the scheme capable of influencing Members in the Commons House of that Parliament, which I do not say it is in any House, and that there were forty county Members against, and twenty for any measure, and also a hundred and thirty borough Members for, and eighty against it: Admitting that all borough Members are to be influenced (which I by no means allow), fifty more are to be worked upon on one side than the other, and there is the majority of fifty. I trust we shall hear no more of it; and that the Noble Lord feels how ill he has been advised in even harbouring the thought.

Does he think this will go down in England, and that the Ministry can acknowledge boroughs saleable and to be private property here, and not there? or that if by such purchase we make what is called a *reform* here, they will be able to withstand the precedent there? Nay, more;

with what reluctance must the British Senate receive among them men delegated by persons whom they may suspect, however unjustly, of having sold themselves, their constituents, and their country, openly and without shame.

When I talk of England, I cannot avoid mentioning the effect this Union may have there. The late Lord Chatham is said always to have objected to a Union, lest the additional number of Members from Ireland might alter the Constitution of the House, and make it too unwieldy, or give too much weight to the democratic balance.

The East-India bill in England was objected to, as giving too much influence to the Minister: but all the East-India bills that were ever framed fell short of this measure. The influence which might be extended to manage three hundred, will remain to manage one hundred; and if there be any to spare, it will be at the Minister's disposal, for the other side of the water.

In short, exclusive of all its injuries to Ireland, it is big with danger to the old fabric of the British Constitution; and if it falls, the empire goes with it, and they, and we, and all of us, fall down together.

Convinced as I am of the numerous and tremendous evils attendant on this measure to us, to the British Constitution, and to the empire, I must feel much regret that I am in a minority
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on the question ; but I have a strong confidence that that minority will be successful in defeating it. It is impossible to suppose, that Ministers can think of proceeding against the determined sense of the one hundred and twenty Members who compose it, two-thirds of the county Members among them, and supported by the voice of the nation. Look on your table at the petitions from twenty-five counties, from eight principal cities and towns, and from Dublin: twenty-five of the counties convened by legal notice have from time to time declared against it, and twenty of them unanimously. The whole mercantile interest deprecate it ; wherever you go, whomever you talk with out of doors, you hear it reprobated universally. Every day brings new conviction of the abhorrence in which it is held throughout the kingdom.

It is the fashion to say that the country is agitated ; and certain letters written by three Members of Parliament, have been held forth as unconstitutional and inflammatory. This is the first time I ever heard a wish in gentlemen to know the real sentiment of the freeholders by legal meetings to be convened by the sheriffs, insulted by such appellations. The Noble Lord and his friends, said the sense of the nation was with the measure. We denied the fact ; and the legal and undoubted right of our con-

constituents to tell us their sentiments could alone ascertain it.

No, Sir, that letter did not irritate ; it was intended to appease : but I will tell you what has irritated, —the reviving this ruinous measure, after its rejection last year. The appeal nominal which the Noble Lord and his friends resorted to, against the decision of Parliament ; the refusing county meetings, which are the constitutional mode of collecting the sense of the freeholders ; —and sending papers directed to no man ; neither address, nor petition, nor instructions, but a pledge of opinion, ---through all the chapels, the markets, the public houses, and even the lowest cabins, for signatures ; and setting those up against *this House* and *the general voice of the kingdom* ; setting up the absentee against the resident, and resting on his property, which he leaves to agents, as a test of superior attachment and superior knowledge of the true interests of the kingdom.

I scarce need mention the unconstitutional use to which the place-bill has been perverted ; and the offering this last and most monstrous proposal of applying the public money to purchase public rights from private individuals.

These, Sir, have irritated the people, and agitated the country ; and the sooner the agitation is at an end the better. I shall therefore, before I sit down, conclude, not by proposing
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an amendment, or giving a negative, but by moving that you leave the chair, in order to put a total end to the question. I believe there are many who vote for this measure, because they have not seen its mischief; to them I speak particularly; and I cannot but strongly hope, that before it finally quits the House, before the last vote is given, the ingenuous love of true liberty, that zeal for their native country, which has at times burst forth in this House, and decided the nation's happiness, will again spring forward; and that, before they seal the doom of Ireland, they will consider how little the frowns and the favours of Government ought to weigh in such a cause; that they will recoil from the measure, and bless the patriotic struggle which will have given them time to reflect, and allowed them to save themselves from remorse, and their country from ruin.

I move, Sir, that you leave the chair.

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APPENDIX.

The State of Duties at present, and as they will stand, should the articles of Union take place, on the Import of the following Articles, of the Growth, Produce or Manufacture of Great Britain.

ARTICLES.	EXISTING DUTIES, In British Money.			DUTIES, should the Union take place. In Irish money
	Amount in Bri- tish Currency.	How Charged if not per Cen- tum.		
Apparel	£. s. d. 12 14 1			£. s. d. 10 0 0 p. ct.
Arms	12 14 1			free
Beer and Ale	6	6 $\frac{19}{8}$ per barrel		free
Blankets coloured	2	1 $\frac{3}{8}$ each		free
Blankets uncoloured	3	4 $\frac{7}{8}$ each		free
Books bound	12 14 1	each		free
Books unbound		2 $\frac{19}{8}$ per lb.		free
Carpets		2 $\frac{7}{8}$ per square yard		free
Carpeting	12 14 1			free
Copper wrought	12 14 1			10 0 0 p. ct.
Copper unwrought	5	3 $\frac{7}{8}$ per cwt.		free
Cotton Manufacture.	12 14 1	and 7 $\frac{2}{3}$ per yard		10 0 0
	1	4 $\frac{7}{8}$ per yard		10 0 0
	12 14 1			10 0 0
		11 $\frac{1}{8}$ per yard		10 0 0
	12 14 1	and 7 $\frac{2}{3}$ per yard		10 0 0

APPENDIX.

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	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
Glass.							
Cutlery	12	14	1		10	0	0
Earthen Ware	19	1	2		10	0	0
Bottles			$11\frac{1}{10}$ per dozen				
Being Vitriol			$1\frac{1}{2}$ each				
Cases for Windows		4	$3\frac{3}{10}$ per 24 leaves		10	0	0
Plates	12	14	1				
Other Glass	12	14	1				
Groceries.							
Sugar.							
Candy	1	15	6 per cwt.		Free, except a countervail- ing duty.		
Leaf	1	15	0 per cwt.				
White	1	1	$3\frac{7}{10}$ per cwt.				
Haberdashery.							
Thread.							
wrought	0	4	$0\frac{1}{2}$ per 12 lbs.				
Gold and Silver	0	8	$8\frac{1}{2}$ per lb.				
Sifters	0	1	$7\frac{1}{2}$				
Unrated	12	14	1		10	0	0
Whited brown	0	3	$1\frac{1}{2}$ per lb.				
Small parcels	12	14	1				
Men's hats	0	2	4 each				
Hats, beaver, wool, and hair	11		$8\frac{1}{2}$ each		10	0	0
Hides tanned	Various duties, according to the description of the hide.				Free except a countervail- ing duty by way of Inland excise.		
Hides untanned							
Hosiery.							
Stockings.							
Cotton	12	14	1				
Silk	0	4	$8\frac{1}{2}$ per pair				
Silk and cotton	12	14	1				
Silk and worsted	12	14	1		10	0	0
Thread	12	14	1				
Sundries, { Of Silk	12	14	1				
{ Net Silk.	12	14	1				
Jewellery	12	14	1				
Mathematical instru- ments	12	14	1		10	0	0
Musical instruments	12	14	1				
Iron & hardware	12	14	1		10	0	0
Iron japanned	19	1	2		10	0	0
Ivory wrought, un- rated	12	14	1		free		
—if in combs	0	1	$2\frac{7}{10}$ per lb.		free		
Linen floor cloth	12	14	1		free		
Linen oil cloth	0	1	$0\frac{1}{10}$ per yd.		free		
Mats	12	14	1		free		
Millinery ware	12	14	1		10	0	0

APPENDIX.

	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
Linseed oil	10	18	$6\frac{9}{10}$	per ton	}	free	
Rape oil	10	18	$6\frac{9}{10}$	per ton			
Train oil	1	3	$5\frac{1}{2}$	per ton			
Painters colours	12	14	1		}	free	
Paper.	{	1	$2\frac{11}{20}$	per ream			
			$10\frac{3}{20}$	per 10 lb.			
	{		$4\frac{2}{5}$	per ream		Free except countervail- ing duties for Inland excise.	
			$10\frac{3}{20}$	per 10 lb.			
	{		$3\frac{3}{5}$	per lb.			
			$3\frac{3}{5}$	per lb.			
	{	2	$0\frac{9}{25}$	p. 100 leaves			
			$\frac{1}{15}$	per lb.			
	{		$3\frac{3}{5}$	per lb.			
Perfumery	12	14	1		}	free	
Pewter wrought		9	$4\frac{1}{2}$	per cwt.			
Tin plates single of	}	7	$0\frac{1}{2}$	per 300 plates	}	free	
300 plates							
Tin plates double of	}	14	$1\frac{1}{2}$	per 300 plates	}	free	
300 plates							
Quilts	12	14	1		}	to continue	
Rock salt, per ton	2	15	$4\frac{1}{2}$				
White salt, per bushel	0	1	$10\frac{4}{16}$				
Saddlery	12	14	1		}	10 0 0	
Silk manufacture p. lb.	0	8	$10\frac{3}{20}$				
Silk and cotton mix- ed manufacture	12	14	1		}	free	
Silk & worsted mixed	12	14	1				
Soap,	12	14	1		}	free	
Starch, per cwt.	0	7	$7\frac{1}{2}$				
Stationary	12	14	1		}	free	
Upholstery ware	12	14	1				
Brass wire, per cwt.	0	11	$8\frac{1}{2}$		}	free	
Iron wire, per cwt.	0	5	$10\frac{2}{5}$				
Steel wire, per lb.	0	0	4		}	free	
Wood ware	12	14	1				
Small articles in general	12	14	1		}	free	

THE END.

